

## Progress Report

To: Natalia Deardorff, Department of Water Resources  
From: Robert Stein, City of Newport Beach  
Re: Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan – Newport Bay  
Watershed  
DWR Agreement Number 46-0000-4498  
**Progress Report #5**  
Report Period: June 1 to August 31, 2007  
Date: September 11, 2007

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### Deliverables

Process amendment: send written notification to DWR

Tracy Billington

John Woodling

### **PROGRAM STATUS**

The watershed planning effort is moving forward in an effective way using the following committee entities.

A **Steering Committee**, composed on senior staff from the County of Orange, Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) and the City of Newport Beach meets weekly or bi-weekly to identify items for discussion or action by the other watershed committee. This Committee is also tasked with monitoring the day-to-day progress of preparing the watershed plan

The **Stakeholder Committee** is composed of agency and NGO staff as well as community members. This committee provides advice to the Steering Committee on the whole spectrum of watershed issues. The Stakeholder Committee also provides the core for the subwatershed working groups.

Actions recommended by the Stakeholder Committee and forwarded to the **Management Committee** for formal review. The Management Committee may recommend that certain issues be forwarded to the Executive Committee for review and approval.

The **Executive Committee** is composed of elected officials from the various agencies in the Watershed. Decisions approved by the Executive Committee require subsequent approval by Agency Boards or Councils if financial obligations are involved.

The following summarizes important activities performed in this period. A chart showing task progress is attached. In general, very important progress has been made in the past period with the completion of the Phase 1 Watershed

Management Plan (focusing on protecting the sensitive marine life areas of the receiving waters) and the kickoff of the more robust, watershed-wide Final Watershed Management Plan. Overall contract percent complete is about 30 to 35 percent. The draft Watershed Management Plan is projected to be completed by mid-January.

#### Task 2.4.2.1 Review Existing Studies and Programs

Task completed.

#### Task 2.4.2.2 Survey of Local Planning Efforts

**Update:** The Steering Committee has scheduled meetings in the next two weeks with the Cities of Tustin, Irvine, Costa Mesa and Lake Forest to discuss subwatershed planning. At these meetings, we will get an update on future planning efforts of these agencies.

**Previously:** The City has continued with watershed stakeholder meetings including the County of Orange RDMD, Regional Water Quality Control Board, Irvine Company, Irvine Ranch Water District, and University of California – Irvine to discuss ongoing studies and program and to review the City's scope of work under this DWR grant. Additional meetings occurred in May with the Cities of Tustin, Irvine, Lake Forest and Santa Ana, as well as the Upper Newport Bay Friends and Naturalists. Meetings are also anticipated with the Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game and other agencies.

#### Task 2.4.2.3 Presentation of Findings to Watershed Strategic Committee Group and Watershed Executive Committee

On August 31<sup>st</sup>, a presentation was made to the Stakeholders Committee on the proposed process to transition from the Phase 1 Plan to the Final Plan. Four watershed goals were proposed based on discussions at the July Stakeholders Committee meeting: Improving Water Supply, Flood Management, Water Quality and Watershed Ecological Health. 70 watershed projects have been compiled that have been preliminarily identified for inclusion in the watershed management plan. Based on the positive response from the Stakeholders Committee, the Management Committee will be polled to see it agrees that the process is on the right track.

#### Task 2.4.2.4 Preparation of Policy and Prioritization Guidelines

Important discussions have taken place internally regarding the challenges of finding an objective way to prioritize projects on a watershed-wide basis. A committee will be formed, perhaps with top decision makers, to further discuss this issue. The web portal (Task 2.4.2.7) includes a working group who is also discussing this critical issue.

#### Task 2.4.2.5 GIS Subcommittee

No additional progress on this task during the last period.

**Background:** Based on discussions with the County of Orange and consultants, it appears the path of least resistance is to setup process where the separate databases maintained by the County Orange RDMD, Orange County Health Care Agency, SCCWRP, City of Newport Beach, UCI etc. can be accessed via the internet through a database 'mall'. As initially envisioned, the internet mall would have a list of web addresses where the interested party can peruse data

from different agencies. Each agency will be responsible for keeping its own database up to date and will decide what data it will make available to the public.

As an auxiliary task, the City will investigate if the data fields for each agency can be standardized to facilitate manipulation and analysis of downloaded data.

#### Task 2.4.2.6 GIS Database Expansion

No additional progress on this task during the last period.

**Previously:** The City's GIS department will try an experiment of loading selected pollutant data from Newport Bay to see how easy it is to incorporate the data into our system and also to investigate the challenges for subsequently accessing the data.

#### Task 2.4.2.7 Web Site Development

A contract has been executed with S4S who is setting up the web portal for the evolving Newport Bay Watershed Management Plan. Approximately 20 people have been access to the portal and are beginning to participate in working groups. Working groups that have been established so far are: Prioritization group, Visioning group, Project Integration group and 5 planning areas covering the 17 subwatersheds.

The portal will facilitate discussion between naturalists and environmentalists on the ecological vision for the watershed. As the management evolves, the portal will be used to allow viewing of the status of individual projects, budgets, and schedules based on the level of authorization granted the individual user. I expect that the site will be more robust by the end of the month.

#### Task 2.4.3.1 Lower Newport Bay Management Plan

Weston Solutions has begun preparation of the Harbor Area Management Plan including the sections on eel grass management, water quality and associated BMPs, and sediment management. Draft report will be prepared at the end of September.

#### Task 2.4.3.2 Upper Newport Bay Management Plan

**Update:** The Upper Newport Bay is a delineated subwatershed. Concerned stakeholders will meet and identify objectives and prepare a core program.

**Previously:** The County of Orange is the lead on preparing a plan for upper Newport Bay. The City, Upper Newport Bay Naturalists and other stakeholders are coordinating with the County on this effort. One of the tasks in the HAMP (Task 1) is a review of previous work on a management plan and to provide recommendations for additional biological assessments, habitat restoration and public usage to meet the future needs of Department of Fish and Game (DFG)

#### Task 2.4.3.3 – Newport Bay/San Diego Creek Watershed Strategic Plan

A Phase 1 plan for the watershed focused was completed on August 1, 2007. The focus of this plan was defining programs and projects to protect the Areas of Special Biological Significance along Newport Coast and the Critical Coastal Areas in Upper Newport Bay and along Newport Coast. This report will provide the foundation for the final IRWMP to be prepared in the Task 2.4.3.4.

#### Task 2.4.3.4 - Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan

The Final Plan will build off the work accomplished under Task 2.4.3.3. As opposed to the Phase 1 Plan, the Final Plan will take a larger view in identifying a watershed-wide program to meet the goals of improving water supply, flood management, water quality and watershed ecological health. A key step is the creation of subwatershed programs based on local stakeholder goals that are in-sync with the watershed-wide goals. To accomplish this in a timely manner, a steering committee composed of staff from the County, Irvine Ranch Water District and the City of Newport Beach are hosting a series of meetings with key Cities to identify key subwatershed programs. A 5-hour workshop with all stakeholders is scheduled for September 25<sup>th</sup>. The Steering Committee will also be attending special meetings with IRWD for a briefing on water supply project projections and a meeting with the Great Park Corporation for a briefing on it development and restoration plans.

### **BUDGET**

In the last period, one consultant contract has been awarded to Dudek & Associates for \$24,400 to assist in preparing subwatershed map and preparing project descriptions. Previous contracts include:

1. S4S has been hired to create a web portal (Task 2.4.2.7). [\$20,000]
2. Weston Solution has been contracted to prepare the Harbor Area Management Plan (Tasks 2.4.3.1 and 2.4.3.2). [\$345,000]
3. Larry Paul and Associates has been hired to assist the City in managing the HAMP contract. [\$30,000]
4. Connective Issues has been awarded a contract to assist with the initial watershed management plan being prepared in cooperation with IRWD (Task 2.4.3.3) and to frame the essential tasks for the Final IRWMP (Task 2.4.3.4). [\$71,400]
5. Other contracts totaling \$75,000 have been executed.

Total value of contract awarded to date is \$565,800. The total available budget (City and grant funds) excluding City in-lieu contributions is \$648,800.

### **SCHEDULE**

Very good progress continues to be made, however additional time past the contract deadline of January 2, 2008 will be needed to complete all the tasks under Tasks 2.4.3. A 6-month extension will be requested.

Attachment: Task Progress Chart